

## Message Text

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43

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 T-03 GAC-01 OMB-01 ACDA-19 IO-12 AID-20 DPW-01

RSR-01 /162 W

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R 130915 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8568

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USDEL FRANCE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

COMUSMACV

CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB

AMCONGEN NHA TRANG

AMCONGEN BIEN HOA

AMCONGEN CAN THO

AMCONGEN DANANG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 4060

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: MR 1 CEASEFIRE AND POLITICAL OVERVIEW FOR PERIOD MARCH  
7-12, 1973

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. MILITARY SITUATION: THE STEADY DECLINE IN INTENSITY OF  
MILITARY ACTIVITY WHICH CHARACTERIZED THE FIRST FIVE WEEKS OF  
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CEASEFIRE IN MR 1 DID NOT CONTINUE DURING WEEK SIX. EXCHANGES OF INDIRECT FIRES IN THE MARINE AND AIRBORNE AO'S QUANG TRI PICKED UP. ENEMY MORTAR ATTACKS, WHICH HAD HELD FROM ZERO TO 200 ROUNDS PER DAY, AVERAGED SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER DURING THE WEEK, PEAKING TO 2,000 ON MARCH 6. COMMUNIST 130 MM FIRE ALSO BECAME MORE FREQUENT. FRIENDLY ARTILLERY FIRES HAVE MOVED STEADILY UPWARDS SINCE MARCH 1 AND EXCEEDED 10,000 ROUNDS DAILY THROUGHOUT THE PAST WEEK. FRIENDLY ARTILLERY FIRES ON THE WESTERN FLANK OF THE AIRBORNE AO ON THE QUANG TRI- THUA THIEN BORDER WERE PARTICULARLY HEAVY AND PROBABLY REPRESENTED AN EFFORT TO FORESTALL COMMUNIST PREPARATIONS FOR FURTHER MAJOR THRUSTS INTO THE LOWLANDS NORTH OF HUE. SPORADIC GROUND CONTACTS WEST AND SOUTH WEST OF HUE CONTINUED AS GV FORCES GUARDED AGAINST COMMUNIST PROBES IN THE 1 ST DIVISION AO. THERE WAS, HOWEVER, NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE LINES OF BATTLE IN ANY AREA NORTH OF THE HAI VAN PASS DURING THE WEEK.

2. IN QUANG NAM THE GVN'S CAMPAIGN TO IMPLANT A PERMANENT PRESENCE IN THE " ARIZONA TERRITORY" ( DAI LOC DISTRICT) CONTINUED TO MEET VC RESISTANCE. IN THE QUE SON VALLEY, FIGHTING FLARED UP THROUGHOUT THE WEEK, WITH CONSIDERABLE FRIENDLY ARTILLERY AND TACTICAL AIR STRIKES BEING EMPLOYED AGAINST THE NVA 711 TH DIVISION. SMALL UNIT ENGAGEMENTS TOOK PLACE IN QUANG TIN IN FAMILIAR MOUNTAINS OF CONTENTION-- THE " PINEAPPLE" NORTHWEST OF TAM KY AND THE FOOTHILLS AREA SOUTH OF THE TAM KY- TIEN PHUOC ROAD. THERE WERE WIDESPREAD BUT LIGHT ENGAGEMENTS THROUGHOUT QUANG NGAI J V X IN THE BATANGAN PENINSULA, AND IN MO DUC AND DUC PHO DISTRICTS, ESPECIALLY NEAR QL-1. FRIENDLY KIA ROSE FROM 87 DURING THE PREVIOUS WEEK TO 154 WHILE COMMUNIST CASUALTIES ( INCLUDING POWS AND RETURNEES), ROSE FROM 213 TO 363.

3. INTELLIGENCE REPORTS CONTINUE TO INDICATE THAT THE DRV/ PRG ARE MAKING A MAXIMUM EFFORT TO REBUILD THEIR CAPABILITY FOR A MAJOR MILITARY THRUST INTO THE NORTHERN HALF OF MR 1. ROAD BUILDING, TRANSPORT, RESUPPLY, BUNKERING, AND ASSOCIATED MILITARY SUPPORT ACTIVITY ALL POINT TO CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR SERIOUS MILITARY PRESSURE IN THE EVENT THAT POLITICAL EFFORTS TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE POPULATED LOWLANDS AREAS FAIL.

4. ICCS: THE ICCS MANAGED A RECONNAISSANCE OF THE PROPOSED ICCS SITE IN COMMUNIST CONTROLLED TERRITORY AT GIO LINH. THE  
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HUNGDEL ASSUMED CHAIRMANSHIP AND APPROACHED THEIR NEW RESPONSIBILITIES WITH A CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE.

5. FPJMC: THE MAJOR JMC DEVELOPMENTS OF THE WEEK CONCERNED ATTEMPTED PRISONER RELEASES. IN REGION 1, 3,300 NVA WERE SUCCESSFULLY RELEASED TO THE COMMUNIST SIDE IN QUANG TRI. IN REGION 2, THE PROPOSED EXCHANGES OF PRISONERS AT TWO PICKUP SITES IN QUANG NGAI AND QUANG TIN PROVINCES WERE CALLED OFF AT THE LAST MINUTE BY THE PRG, WHO ALLEGED THAT GVN MILITARY OPERATIONS HAD INTERFERED WITH THE RELEASE SITE IN QUANG NGAI. BOTH SITES ARE IN CONTESTED AREAS WHERE THE GVN HAS HAD CONTINUED PRESENCE.

6. POLITICAL ACTIVITY: PRESIDENT THIEU PAID HIS RESPECTS AT THE FUNERAL OF THICH TINH KHIET, SUPREME PATRIARCH OF THE UNITED BUDDHIST CHURCH, ON MARCH 9 AT TU DEM PAGODA IN HUE. HIS PRESENCE AT THE FUNERAL NO DOUBT CREATED A FAVORABLE IMPRESSION AMONG THE BUDDHIST FAITHFUL. THE PRESIDENT ALSO VISITED SA HUYNH IN SOUTHERN QUANG NGAI.

7. POPULAR FRONT ( PF) CHAPTERS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED IN NAME THROUGHOUT MR 1 EXCEPT IN HUE, BUT THE PF HAS MADE ONLY LIMITED PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING ITS STATED GOAL OF UNITING EXISTING POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS. PF ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS ARE MOST VISIBLE IN HUE WHERE SEVERAL POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE TEMPORARILY UNITED TO BARGAIN WITH GVN AUTHORITIES FOR A DIMINISHMENT OF LOCAL DEMOCRACY PARTY POWER IN EXCHANGE FOR THEIR FORMAL PARTICIPATION IN THE PF.  
BUNKER

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